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# The Making of a Radical Protestant

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*by Howard A. Snyder*

“In religion I am for as few innovations as possible. I love the old wine best.”<sup>1</sup>

The words are those of John Wesley, one of the greatest innovators in Church history. Although Wesley had turned 86 when he penned the remark in a letter from Dublin, the words are not just the reaction of a crusty old gentleman. Wesley could have said the same thing 50 years earlier.

The remark is, in fact, characteristic of Wesley’s whole ecclesiology. The key words are “as possible.” Hold to the old. But if the old hinders the Gospel, then changes and innovations become imperative. Such a view implies a working synthesis of old and new, tradition and innovation. Wesley’s ecclesiology was precisely such a synthesis.

By any standards, John Wesley was a remarkable man. His life (1703-1791) very nearly spanned the eighteenth century. From the time he began “field preaching” until his death he traveled some 225,000 miles and preached more than 40,000 times, sometimes to crowds of more than 20,000.<sup>2</sup> Membership in the Methodist societies totaled nearly 26,000 in 1767, and at Wesley’s death he left behind 72,000 Methodists in Great Britain and Ireland, and a fledgling Methodist denomination in America of some 57,000 members.<sup>3</sup> According to Vulliamy, Wesley was the “ascendant personality” of his age, and more widely known in America than any Englishman of the time.<sup>4</sup>

But the reasons for studying Wesley today are more pressing and pragmatic than merely historical curiosity. Wesley’s role in bringing spiritual renewal to a rapidly industrializing society, and his understanding and practice of Christian discipleship suggest some aspects of his continuing relevance.<sup>5</sup>

If anything, Wesley is more significant for today than for any period since the eighteenth century. He is important — and often cited — as an example of warm-hearted evangelism combined with

active social reform. A growing awareness of his historical significance is evidenced by Bernard Semmel's 1973 book, *The Methodist Revolution*, and by the Sixth Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies focusing on "Sanctification and Liberation" in July, 1977.

I also see evidence of a rising appreciation of Wesley today *precisely as a theologian*. Many of us have been somewhat apologetic about Wesley's theological work, saying that, after all, Wesley did not attempt to write a systematic theology. This is true. But perhaps this is Wesley's strength, not his weakness. Theologians, of course, especially admire other theologians who have neat and profound systems. I suspect that Calvin's theological reputation rests too greatly on the fact that Calvin was a great logical systematizer. Therefore other theologians like to study him, great literature on Calvinism exists, and Wesley has been considered a second-rate theologian. We have been too content to say, "As a theologian, Wesley was a great revivalist!"

But today two new-but-old truths are dawning on us as Christians. First, theology must be related to life. Theology must be tied to *praxis* and grow out of *praxis*, as the Latin American theologians have been insisting. Secondly, theology is not just the work of "theologians," but is the work of the whole Body of Christ. All Christians are called to be "theologians," if by that we mean all Christians are to be literate about the Biblical faith and know how to apply that faith intelligently to all of life. We are on the verge of a fuller recovery of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

For these and other reasons, I believe Wesley's reputation *as a theologian* is growing, and will grow. As Skevington Wood recently wrote,

The stature of John Wesley as a theologian is being increasingly recognized today. For too long it has been assumed that the founder of Methodism was mainly a man of action and only minimally a man of constructive thought. Recent years, however, have witnessed a radical reappraisal of his theological role, which in its turn has required that the nature of his distinctive doctrinal emphasis should be taken into serious consideration.<sup>5a</sup>

In these articles I wish to discuss Wesley both as practitioner and

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as theologian. For in Wesley, theology and practice were really one. From the beginning, his theological work was addressed to practical questions, and he most earnestly cared that his practice be grounded in sound doctrine.

Since graduating from seminary in 1966, I have become increasingly convinced that *ecclesiology* — the doctrine of the Church — is crucially important to evangelical faith. The growing emphasis today on discipleship, lifestyle, church growth, and similar concerns further confirms this conviction. We are coming to see that *soteriology* devoid of a Biblical *ecclesiology* cannot really be Biblical. The crucial question today is: What is the shape of our corporate life as the people of God in the world?

Wesley can help us precisely at these points. So we are going to look at him — not so much as Wesley the Anglican, but as Wesley the Free Churchman; Wesley the Radical Protestant. We are going to confront questions raised by the contemporary reappraisal of the Radical Reformation and the current resurgence of Anabaptist and other Radical Protestant studies. Our aim will be, first, to understand Wesley better by looking at him from an angle too little examined and, secondly, to make some applications to the contemporary situation of the Church.

To raise the question of Wesley's theory and practice of the Church is almost unavoidably to raise the question of Radical Protestantism, or of the Radical Reformation. With the Radical Reformers, and especially with the Anabaptists, the question of the meaning of the Church was a central issue — so much so that Franklin Littell entitled his ground-breaking study of Anabaptism, *The Anabaptist View of the Church*. The Radical Reformers wanted to carry the Reformation clear through to a radical restructuring of the life and experience of the Christian community. So did John Wesley. Thus Wesley must be seen as standing, at least to some degree, within the Radical Protestant tradition. The point of these articles is to answer the question, to what degree is this so?

George H. Williams has given currency to the term "Radical Reformation" through his 1962 book, *The Radical Reformation*. He includes Anabaptists, Spiritualists and Evangelical Rationalists within the term "Radical Reformation," and points out that these movements constituted a genuine third option in the sixteenth century. The classical or Magisterial Reformation saw itself as battling decadent Roman Catholicism on the one hand and the

Radicals on the other. Largely because the mainline Reformers had the upper hand politically, the Radical Reformers had received a “bad press” for four centuries. The irony is that today many Protestants find themselves asking essentially the same questions the Anabaptists asked — and, in attempting to be Biblical, often find themselves coming to similar conclusions. There is growing awareness that the questions of discipleship, lifestyle, Gospel obedience and the shape of the Church are crucial. Williams reminds us that today “Christians of many denominations are finding themselves constitutionally and in certain other ways closer to the descendants of the despised sectaries of the Reformation Era than to the classical defenders of a reformed *corpus christianum*.”<sup>5b</sup>

It is from this perspective that we come to look at John Wesley and his understanding of the Church.

Wesley’s view of the Church was integral to his ministry and practice. Frank Baker notes, “He did not attempt to formulate a new doctrine of the church but to remedy its decadence.”<sup>6</sup> But his ministry of renewal forced him continually to deal with ecclesiological questions. As Ernest Stoeffler notes, “Like Augustine and Luther he was predominantly a man of action whose theology was fashioned on the anvil of practical issues which had to be met. Hence, we find in him a progressive change, if not in theological substance, then at least in the placing of accents and the making of emphases.”<sup>7</sup>

Wesley’s ecclesiology has been variously described as Catholic, Anglican, Classical Protestant, Puritan, and Free Church — and, as Stoeffler comments, “enough passages can be found in John Wesley’s many writings which will support [any] one or all of these interpretations.”<sup>8</sup> Yet his ministry led to the formation of one of the largest of the Free Churches, and Wesley is, therefore, frequently seen as standing in the Free Church tradition.<sup>9</sup>

These articles will seek to describe Wesley’s conception of the Church and to determine to what degree Wesley may be considered representative of the Free Church or Believers’ Church tradition. To what extent does Wesley stand in continuity with that stream of Radical Protestantism whose major source is sixteenth-century Anabaptism, but which is represented also in a broad range of “free church” or “believers’ church” groups? The concern here is both to note direct historical links and to compare Wesley to a Believers’ Church model or typology. We will be dealing not specifically with sixteenth-century Anabaptism, but with the Radical Protestant

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*perspective* on the Church which issues primarily, but not exclusively, from Anabaptism. I am using “Believers’ Church” and “Radical Protestant” as virtually synonymous descriptive terms to designate this perspective. Such usage finds precedent and justification in the title and content of Donald Durnbaugh’s significant study, *The Believer’s Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism*.<sup>10</sup>

Wesley’s contacts with the Moravian Brethren during the critical period of his spiritual quest are well known. Because these contacts were so important both for Wesley’s faith and for his practice and ministry (and thus his ecclesiology), and because of the Believers’ Church character of the Moravians, it will be helpful to review the history of these contacts in some detail as background for the typological comparison. My other two articles will focus on Wesley’s view of the Church, and will present a comparison of his views with the Believers’ Church typology.

The years 1738 to 1740 were the critical ones in John Wesley’s religious experience and in the beginning of the Methodist movement. They also mark the period of Wesley’s most intimate contact with the Moravian Brethren. Four crises, in particular, may be identified during this period:

- 1) Wesley’s sense of failure on returning from America in February, 1738.
- 2) Wesley’s “heart-warming experience” on May 24, 1738.
- 3) The decision to begin field preaching in April, 1739.
- 4) The break with the Fetter Lane Society on July 20, 1740.

These crises and their outcome largely determined the direction of Wesley’s ministry for the remainder of his life, and also had their impact on his understanding of the Church.

### **Background, 1725-37**

It may be said that Wesley’s religious quest began in 1725. Urged by his father,<sup>11</sup> he began to study for ordination. The direction of his quest was clear from the beginning: he “began to aim at, and pray for inward holiness.”<sup>12</sup> He sought holiness in every area of life and began his lifelong custom of weekly communion.<sup>13</sup>

Wesley was ordained deacon in September, 1725, and ordained priest in July, 1728. In the intervening years he was elected a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford (1726), and received his Master of Arts degree (1727). Wesley read extensively during this period, and was

attracted toward mysticism. He read William Law's *Serious Call to A Devout and Holy Life* shortly after it was published in 1728. Vulliamy notes that "the *Serious Call* played its part in confirming the habits of personal discipline and of pious exclusion which marked the life of Wesley at Oxford from 1729 to 1735" and strengthened his mystical leanings "until the Moravian example gave to Wesley's life an essentially practical tendency."<sup>14</sup>

Wesley was at Oxford almost constantly from 1729 until 1735. He quickly became the leader of the "Holy Club" which his brother Charles had organized there with two others. This religious call grew and was active until John and Charles left for Georgia in 1735; one of the members was George Whitefield. The club "was neither more nor less than a society of very young and very earnest High Churchmen, with evangelistic views and a true desire to lead the lives of exemplary Christians,"<sup>15</sup> notes Vulliamy. Its primary aim was the spiritual development of its members. Wesley wrote to his father in 1734, "My one aim in life is to secure personal holiness, for without being holy myself I cannot promote real holiness in others."<sup>16</sup> Good works were an expression of this desire for holiness: visiting prisoners and poor families, and helping them with financial aid and school classes for children.<sup>17</sup>

The Holy Club observed a strict discipline which John Wesley himself devised. Vulliamy gives this description:

The members of the Club spent an hour, morning and evening, in private prayer. At nine, twelve and three o'clock they recited a collect, and at all times they examined themselves closely, watching for signs of grace, and trying to preserve a high degree of religious fervour. They made use of pious ejaculations, they frequently consulted their Bibles, and they noted, in cipher diaries, all the particulars of their daily employment. One hour each day was set apart for meditation. . . . They fasted twice a week, observed all the feasts of the Church, and received the Sacraments every Sunday. Before going into company they prepared their conversation, so that words might not be spoken without purpose. The Primitive Church, in so far as they had knowledge of it, was to be taken as their pattern.<sup>18</sup>

Small wonder that Wesley and his companions were derisively

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called “Methodists” (not a new term), “Sacramentarians,” “Enthusiasts,” “Bible Moths,” the “Reforming Club,” and the “Supererogation Men.” The name “Holy Club” was apparently most popular among Oxford students, but the term “Methodist” was the one that stuck permanently to Wesley.<sup>19</sup>

Wesley himself lived a very spartan existence at Oxford. He lived on 28 pounds a year, giving away all he did not need for clothing and sustenance. In one year he gave away 62 pounds; in another, 92.<sup>20</sup> All in all, one sees in Wesley many traits which were to accompany him all his life.

John and Charles went to London in 1735, and there met Colonel Oglethorpe who was organizing a group to go to Georgia. The Wesleys agreed to go along, John as a missionary to the Indians. They soon set sail for the New World; the Holy Club at Oxford soon disintegrated.

Wesley’s first close contact with the Moravians was on board ship to Georgia. He noted in his Journal,

At seven I went to the Germans [Moravians]. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behaviour. Of their humility they had given a continual proof, by performing those servile offices for the other passengers which none of the English would undertake; . . . If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth.<sup>21</sup>

What impressed Wesley was not only the Moravians’ piety and good works, but their calm assurance of faith during storms at sea, an assurance he lacked. During his three years in Georgia he maintained close contact with the Moravians, including the missionary, Spangenberg.

In his Georgian ministry, Wesley’s zeal for holiness became “a burning desire to revitalize the Church” and build “a model Christian community in one Anglican parish.”<sup>22</sup> Understandably, the rigor of his efforts was not universally appreciated. Already, however, he was introducing such innovations as hymn-singing in public worship and the use of lay men and women in parish work.<sup>23</sup> Because of his zeal and his innovations he was accused, says Baker, of “leaving the Church of England by two doors at the same time” — Roman Catholicism and Puritan Separatism. But his experiments were

actually “in large measure the results of his attempt to return to the spirit and behaviour of the primitive church.”<sup>24</sup>

Wesley thought he saw in the Moravians some elements, at least, of authentic primitive church life, and he followed some of their methods. Thus Baker notes,

Most important of all, both in Savannah and Frederica, Wesley organized societies for religious fellowship quite apart from ordered public worship. In these gatherings the members spent about an hour in ‘prayer, singing and mutual exhortation,’ naturally under the close supervision whenever possible of their spiritual director . . . . Wesley even divided these societies into the ‘more intimate union’ of ‘bands’ after the Moravian pattern. It was this which readily fostered the charge of his having instituted a Roman Catholic confessional, for mutual confession was indeed one of the purposes of these small homogeneous groups.<sup>25</sup>

Wesley returned to England in early 1738, arriving in London on February 3. He returned amid controversy, considering his missionary efforts a failure. He had been unable to make contact with the Indians. He had stirred up opposition and controversy among the Anglican settlers. And he knew he lacked inward peace of soul.

### **Encounter with Peter Böhler, 1738**

The Moravian Brethren under Count Zinzendorf were themselves an infant movement in 1738, but already they had contacts in England. The Moravian historian Holmes relates,

At a very early period after the Renewal of their Church, the Brethren formed pleasing acquaintances in England. To meet the wishes of some persons in London, who desired information of the establishment at Herrnhut, a deputation was sent thither in 1728.<sup>26</sup>

In 1734 a group of Moravian missionaries arrived in London to secure permission from the Trustees of Georgia to go to America for the sake of religious liberty and “an opportunity of preaching the gospel.”<sup>27</sup> A second group of 26 arrived in 1735; it was this group



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which sailed with the Wesleys to Georgia.<sup>28</sup> Zinzendorf himself visited England in 1737 and organized a Moravian “Diaspora Society” in London.<sup>29</sup>

When Wesley returned to London in 1738, he soon encountered another Moravian missionary, Peter Böhler. Under date of February 7, Wesley recorded in his Journal,

A day much to be rememberd. At the house of Mr. Weinantz, . . . I met Peter Böhler [and others], just then landed from Germany. Finding they had no acquaintance in England, I offered to procure them a lodging; and did so, near Mr. Hutton’s, where I then was.<sup>30</sup>

Peter Böhler (1712-1775), 25 when Wesley met him, was an effective Bändhalter, or Band-organizer, for the Moravians. Formerly a Lutheran, he had become acquainted with the Moravians while studying at the University of Jena, and spent his life in Moravian missionary work in America and England.<sup>31</sup>

Wesley must have been impressed with Böhler on two counts: his convincing presentation of instantaneous conversion by faith alone, and his practical organizing skill. In many ways, including his erudition, he was a man much like Wesley. Wesley walked and talked frequently with Böhler from the time of his first encounter until Böhler’s departure for America on May 4. Both John and Charles accompanied Böhler to Oxford on February 17, but they were puzzled by Böhler’s views. Böhler wrote Zinzendorf, “I traveled with the two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, from London to Oxford. The elder, John, is a good-natured man; he knew he did not properly believe on the Saviour, and was willing to be taught.”<sup>32</sup>

Böhler spent some days at Oxford and organized a Band there. Wesley had further discussions with him both there and later at London. In March Wesley recorded, “I was, on Sunday the fifth, clearly convinced of unbelief; of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved.”<sup>33</sup>

About this time Wesley began a worship practice which was later much criticized as an irregularity: extemporaneous prayer. He noted on April 1,

being at Mr. Fox’s society [at Oxford], my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which

we are accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more; but to pray indifferently with a form or without as I may find suitable to particular occasions.<sup>34</sup>

During these weeks Wesley was seeking the true understanding and experience of salvation by faith. He went back to reread the New Testament in Greek, and discovered that instantaneous conversions did indeed take place in the New Testament church. He talked with Böhler again on April 26, and Böhler later recorded, "He wept bitterly and asked me to pray with him. I can freely affirm, that he is a poor, broken-hearted sinner, hungering after a better righteousness than that which he had thus far had, even the righteousness of Christ."<sup>35</sup> Böhler reported that Wesley was one among several who were seeking a closer fellowship "and want therefore to begin a Band."<sup>36</sup>

On May 1, Wesley records, "This evening our little Society began, which afterwards met in Fetter Lane."<sup>37</sup> This was the beginning of the Fetter Lane Society (more will be said about it shortly), which seems to have been organized by Wesley at the advice of Böhler.

Wesley "broke the faith barrier" (as one has written<sup>38</sup>) on Wednesday, May 24, about three weeks after Böhler departed for America. This was his famous heart-warming experience during a meeting in Aldersgate Street, an experience which Wesley himself saw as the critical turning-point in his own spiritual quest. "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

### **The Fetter Lane Society**

James Hutton (1715-1795) seems to have been a key figure both in the Aldersgate Street group and in the Fetter Lane Society, and was an important link between Wesley and the Moravians. He had been converted under John Wesley's preaching *before* Wesley went to Georgia. The Wesleys often stayed in the Hutton home, and his home and bookshop, "The Bible and Sun," became a chief point of contact between the Wesleys and Moravians passing through London or living there.<sup>39</sup> Hutton had organized a little group which met on Wednesday evenings in Aldersgate Street to hear the correspondence and diaries from Georgia read.<sup>40</sup> It seems likely this

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was the meeting Wesley attended on May 24.

Religious “societies” were very common in England at this period, and had been for some time, going back to Anthony Horneck in 1678.<sup>41</sup> The Fetter Lane Society, as well as the Holy Club and numerous other societies Wesley formed or was involved in, should be seen in this context. But the Fetter Lane Society was also markedly Moravian in inspiration, due especially to the influence of Peter Böhler.

Precisely who organized and drew up the rules for this society — Wesley or Böhler — is unclear, but they both had a hand in it. Bowmer is right that “Fetter Lane was not a Moravian Society, but a Religious Society in connexion with the Church of England.”<sup>42</sup> But it was precisely Zinzendorf’s dream to organize a network of such societies throughout the main bodies of the Church, without separating from them, and this would have been Böhler’s intent. Lewis in *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* says Böhler himself drew up the rules for the society at James Hutton’s house, while R. A. Knox in *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* says Fetter Lane “was not a Moravian institution.”<sup>43</sup> The truth seems to be that John and Charles Wesley, Hutton, Böhler, and a few others met at Hutton’s home on the evening of May 1 and there organized the society at Böhler’s suggestion.<sup>44</sup> The society formed, in Wesley’s words, “In obedience to the command of God, by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Böhler,”<sup>45</sup> and the rules of the society were later printed with the title, “Orders of a Religious Society, meeting in Fetter Lane; in obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Böhler, 1738.”<sup>46</sup>

Addison considers that “the formal organization” of the Fetter Lane Society “marks the definite crystallization of the London group in the Herrnhut mold,” and yet “the system was thoroughly suited to the genius of nascent Methodist organization,” which took over many of its principles.<sup>47</sup> The society’s rules included weekly meetings for prayer and confession, division into bands of five to ten persons each, the right and duty of each person to speak freely, procedures for admitting new members, and provision for a monthly love feast from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.<sup>48</sup> An agreed financial contribution was collected monthly.<sup>49</sup> Though Wesley could not have foreseen it, the Fetter Lane Society was to become the “seed-plot of the British Moravian Church, an *ecclesiola* which became an *ecclesia*.”<sup>50</sup>

Wesley now had a new-found assurance of faith, a supportive

group to share his life with, and an expanding preaching ministry. He must have seen that now, finally, his dream of a significant restoration of primitive Christianity within the Church of England was possible. He wanted to learn more, however, from the Continental Moravians and other Pietists, and so on June 7 he “determined, if God should permit, to retire for a short time into Germany. I had fully proposed before I left Georgia so to do. . . .”<sup>51</sup>

Stoeffler calls Wesley’s trip to Germany an “intentional study-tour of Pietist centers.” Says Stoeffler,

He was not interested in learning any more about the nature of Moravian piety. . . . He had come to regard the life of faith which he had witnessed among the Moravians, and which he had now found himself, in the same light as did the Moravians. . . . To them the corporate aspect of conscious religious renewal through “living faith” signified, as it were, a recapturing of the life of faith of the primitive Christian community. Their diaspora societies, therefore, were interpreted as nothing more and nothing less than a very much needed means of restoring koinonia, the spirit, the message, and the sense of mission of that community within a given religious establishment, and of doing so without the need of disrupting the order of that establishment. What his study-trip to the Continent did for Wesley, then, was to afford him an opportunity to see the diaspora arrangement of the Moravians (as well as the *collegio pietatis* of church-related Pietism in general) in actual operation. Thus he now became fully aware of the possibilities of this arrangement for his own work as he began to envision that work.<sup>52</sup>

Thus Wesley’s conversion gave him “a new vision of the religious life” while his trip to Germany provided “a look at a new model,” not found in his own tradition, by means of which “his newly found religious experience, reproduced in others, could become an integral part of his inherited understanding of the church.”<sup>53</sup>

Wesley went to the continent in June, 1738, met Zinzendorf at Marieborn, and reached Herrnhut on August 1. He spent some days at Herrnhut and other centers. He returned to London on September 16 and the next day recorded, “I began again to declare in my own country the glad tidings of salvation.”<sup>54</sup> In October he wrote a letter

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to “the Church of God which is in Hernhuth” which reveals both his appreciation for the Moravians and his growing ministry:

We are endeavoring here also, by the grace which is given us, to be followers of you, as ye are of Christ. Fourteen were added to us, since our return, so that we have now eight bands of men, consisting of 56 persons; all of whom seek for salvation only in the blood of Christ. As yet we have only two small bands of women; the one of three, the other of five persons. But here are many others who only wait till we have leisure to instruct them, how they may most effectively build up one another in the faith and love of Him who gave himself for them.

Though my brother and I are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet (thanks be to God!) there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Likewise every evening, and on set evenings in the week at two several places, we publish the word of reconciliation, sometimes to 20 or 30, sometimes to 50 or 60, sometimes to 300 or 400 persons, met together to hear it.<sup>55</sup>

Wesley came back from the Continent with a great appreciation for Moravian faith and piety, but also with “a growing uneasiness about their ‘quietism,’ their tendencies toward spiritual complacency and the personality cult which had grown up around Count Zinzendorf.”<sup>56</sup> He threw himself immediately into itinerant evangelism and care of converts in the London area, and seems initially to have assumed the primary leadership of the Fetter Lane Society, with James Hutton as his chief lieutenant.<sup>57</sup>

Two early 1739 entries in Wesley’s Journal suggest something of the nature of the embryonic renewal:

Monday, January 1, 1739. Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love feast in Fetter Lane, with about 60 of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, inasmuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many

fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."<sup>58</sup>

March 14, London. During my stay here, I was fully employed, between our own Society in Fetter Lane, and many others, where I was continually desired to expound.<sup>59</sup>

### **Beginning of Field Preaching, 1739**

George Whitefield, present at Fetter Lane on January 1, had just returned from America. He was soon barred from London pulpits, and went to Bristol. There on February 17 he preached for the first time in the open air to about 200 colliers at Kingswood. Within three weeks the crowds had grown to as high as 10,000, and Whitefield called on Wesley for help.<sup>60</sup>

The busy port city of Bristol, 100 miles west of London, was the second city in the Kingdom in Wesley's day, numbering about 30,000 inhabitants.<sup>61</sup> It also stood close to the Welsh border and was the center of the coal mining industry which fed England's booming industrial revolution.

Whitefield seems to have been drawn to the Bristol area for three reasons. In the first place, he was from this area, his native city being Gloucester, near the Welsh border north of Bristol. Secondly, Whitefield was in touch with Howell Harris, leader of the Welsh revival which had broken out some years earlier.<sup>62</sup> The third significant fact is that turmoil and rioting had broken out among the coal miners of the region, particularly at Kingswood. Halévey notes, "The Kingswood miners had risen. On 19 January, after the arrest of two of their leaders, the assistance of soldiers was necessary to get the two prisoners away in the face of all the mobbing women and amid a barrage of stones. On 17 February, Whitefield came to Kingswood."<sup>63</sup> The disturbances around Bristol were part of a larger pattern of unrest during the period 1738-1740 related to high corn prices, low wages, and the impoverished condition of the new class of urban workers. Bernard Semmel notes, "The years 1739 and 1740, when Methodism erupted, were especially bad years, but there were intermittent food riots throughout the century. . . . the Kingswood miners . . . were regularly a source of difficulty."<sup>64</sup>

Whitefield had immediate success at Bristol, especially among the

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Kingswood colliers. A notice in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1739, reads:

*Bristol.* The Rev. Mr. Whitefield, . . . has been wonderfully laborious and successful, especially among the poor Prisoners in Newgate, and the rude Colliers of Kingswood, preaching every day to large audiences, visiting, and expounding to religious Societies. On Saturday the eighteenth Instant he preach'd at Hannum Mount to five or six thousand Persons, amongst them many Colliers. In the Evening he removed to the Common, where . . . were crowded . . . so great a Multitude . . . computed at 20,000 People . . . .<sup>65</sup>

Whitefield's efforts did not go unnoticed — or uncriticized — in London. One gentleman warned,

The Industry of the inferior People in a Society is the great Source of its Prosperity. But if one Man, like the Rev. Mr. Whitefield should have it in his Power, by his Preaching, to detain five or six thousands of the Vulgar from their daily Labour, what a Loss, in a little Time, may this bring to the Publick! — For my part, I shall expect to hear of a prodigious Rise in the Price of Coals, about the City of Bristol, if this Gentleman proceeds, as he has begun, with his charitable Lectures to the Colliers of Kingswood.<sup>66</sup>

Whitefield knew of Wesley's organizing skills, and of his effectiveness as a preacher. But until now Wesley in England had preached only in regular church services. Should he now respond to Whitefield's appeal and assist in the open-air meetings at Bristol? Charles thought he should not, but finally the Fetter Lane Society agreed he should go.

Wesley records,

Saturday, March 31st, in the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (until very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to

decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church.<sup>67</sup>

Sunday evening Wesley spoke to a little society on the Sermon on the Mount — “one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching,” he observed, “though I suppose there were churches at that time also.”<sup>68</sup> The next day, Monday, April 2, Wesley reports:

At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city to about three thousand people. The Scripture on which I spoke was this: . . . “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.”<sup>69</sup>

Wesley began immediately to organize. He formed a number of societies and on May 9 acquired a piece of property where he built his “New Room” as a central meeting place.<sup>70</sup> Whitefield returned to America in August, and Wesley was left in charge of the growing movement. He divided his time between Bristol and London, concentrating on open air preaching, organizing, and speaking in the evenings to an increasing number of societies.

### **Wesley's Organization**

Within a period of months Wesley had established the basic organizational patterns which were to characterize Methodism throughout his lifetime. These patterns reveal something of Wesley's own understanding of the Church. Wesley himself gave a concise explanation of how these forms developed in a 1748 letter which he called “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists.”<sup>71</sup>

*The Society.* Wesley's first converts in London in 1739 wanted to meet with him regularly, and he was ready to do so. As numbers increased he quickly saw he could not visit them all individually in their homes; so he told them, “If you will all of you come together every Thursday, in the evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer, and give you the best advice I can.” Wesley comments,

Thus arose, without any previous design on either side, what was afterwards called *a Society*; a very innocent name, and



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very common in London, for any number of people associating themselves together . . . . They therefore united themselves ‘in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation.’

There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into this society, — ‘a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.’<sup>72</sup>

Wesley organized dozens of such societies in the London and Bristol areas. All the groups together were called the United Societies. The main structural difference between these Methodist societies and the many other similar societies then functioning was that these were directly under the control of Wesley, and were united together chiefly in his person. Wesley was, of course, still meeting at this time with the Fetter Lane Society.

Of the rise of the Methodist societies Wesley says characteristically, “Upon reflection, I could not but observe, This is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity.”<sup>73</sup>

*The Bands.* Of all Wesley’s innovations, the Bands seem most directly traceable to Moravian influence. Baker notes, “On Wesley’s return from his pilgrimage to Herrnhut he had enthusiastically advocated the system of ‘bands’ for all the religious societies in London, including that in Fetter Lane.”<sup>74</sup>

The Bands were small cells of men or women, and the purpose was pastoral. New converts were beset with temptations and needed both encouragement and opportunity for confession. Wesley says,

These, therefore, wanted some means of closer union; they wanted to pour out their hearts without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still easily beset them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. And they were the more desirous of this, when they observed it was the express advice of an inspired writer: ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.’

In compliance with their desire, I divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married

or single women, together.<sup>75</sup>

A list of rules for Band Societies was drawn up as early as December, 1738.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the Bands actually preceded both the organized Methodist societies and the class meetings.

*The Class Meeting.* The Wesleyan class meeting arose in Bristol in early 1742, and somewhat by accident. Wesley was increasingly concerned that many Methodists did not live the Gospel; "several grew cold, and gave way to sins which had long easily beset them." Clearly some mechanism for exercising discipline was needed.

To meet the preaching-house debt in Bristol, the society there (now numbering over 1,100) was divided into "classes" of a dozen each. Leaders were appointed to secure weekly contributions toward the debt, and Wesley asked the leaders also to "make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly."<sup>77</sup> This provided the opportunity for exercising the discipline. Thus, says Wesley,

As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places. Evil men were detected, and reprov'd. They were borne with for a season. If they forsook their sins, we received them gladly; if they obstinately persisted therein, it was openly declared that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced, that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the society.<sup>78</sup>

At first the class leaders visited the members in their homes, but this proved to be too time consuming and somewhat complicated for several reasons. Therefore:

Upon all these considerations it was agreed, that those of each class should meet together. And by this means, a more full inquiry was made into the behaviour of each person. . . . Advice or reproof was given as need required, quarrels made up, misunderstandings removed: and after an hour or two spent in this labour of love, they concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.<sup>79</sup>

It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now

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happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they *had* not so much as an idea before. They began to “bear one another’s burdens,” and naturally to “care for each other.” As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. And “speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ. . . .”<sup>80</sup>

It should be observed that the class meetings were not designed as “Christian growth groups,” or as cells for *koinonia* — although in fact they did serve that function. Their primary purpose was discipline. The Band had already been instituted as the primary growth cell of Methodism. As Skevington Wood observes, “The class was the disciplinary unit of the society” and was “the keystone of the entire Methodist edifice,” while the Band was the confessional unit. Wood observes,

These inner groups were continued in the form in which they had been taken over from the Fetter Lane Society, with its predominantly Moravian stamp. . . . This mutual confession to one another, based on the scriptural injunction of James 5:16, was the Methodist equivalent of auricular confession to a priest, and was designed to bring the same sense of relief and catharsis.<sup>81</sup>

All band members met together quarterly for the love feast — another Moravian contribution. A system of band tickets was used, and only band members were to be admitted to the love feasts.<sup>82</sup>

Leaders in the Methodist movement now included the preachers Wesley appointed, assistants, class and band leaders, stewards, visitors of the sick, and schoolmasters. In providing for the care of the sick Wesley observed, “Upon reflection, I saw how exactly, in this also, we had copied after the primitive Church.”<sup>83</sup>

### **Separation from the Moravians**

Wesley’s heavy involvement in the growing work at Bristol meant that he was frequently away from London. But while in London he was active in the Fetter Lane Society and in looking after the expanding flock of Methodists there.

The two Wesleys and James Hutton seem to have been the

principal figures in the Fetter Lane Society until October, 1739. In that month Philip Henry Molther arrived from the continent. It was conflict between Wesley's and Molther's views which led to Wesley's separation from the Fetter Lane Society in July, 1740.

As early as June, 1739, Wesley at Bristol was receiving reports from London that the Fetter Lane Society was falling apart and needed him. Apparently some of the Moravian Brethren also saw the need for more consistent leadership and applied to Germany for someone to be sent. This move, and the mixed character of the society at this time, are suggested by Holmes:

At the request of the friends of the Brethren in London, one of their ministers, Philip Henry Molther, was appointed to care for the Society, which had been formed in the metropolis. The persons comprising this Society, were partly those, who had been excited to greater zeal in religion by the labors of the two Wesleys, and partly such as ascribed their spiritual attainments to their acquaintance with the Brethren.<sup>84</sup>

A leadership struggle and a clash of views involving Wesley and Molther, and secondarily, Charles Wesley and James Hutton, began soon after Molther arrived.

Philip Molther (1713-1780) was, like Böhler, a young Lutheran student at the University of Jena who had become an ordained minister of the Moravians.<sup>85</sup> He taught a doctrine of "stillness" that ran directly counter to Wesley's emphasis on the means of grace. He began telling the people at Fetter Lane that they did not truly have saving faith if they still had any doubt or fear. Therefore they should abstain from all the ordinances, particularly the Lord's Supper, and "be still" before the Lord, until they received true faith. The ordinances are not really means of grace, he taught, for Christ is the only means. Charles Wesley commented, "He expressly denies that grace, or the Spirit, is transmitted through the means, particularly through the Supper."<sup>86</sup>

Hutton was apparently won over by Molther, and Charles very nearly so. When John arrived back in London November 3, he saw how far Molther's teaching had already been accepted:

Our Society met at seven in the morning [Sunday,

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November 4], and continued silent till eight. . . . In the evening I met the women of our Society at Fetter Lane, where some of the brethren strongly intimated, that none of them had any true faith; and then asserted in plain terms, 1) 'That till they had true faith they ought to be still, — that is, as they explained themselves, to abstain from the means of grace, as they are called, the Lord's Supper in particular.' 2) 'That the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ.'<sup>87</sup>

August Spangenberg, the Moravian leader whom Wesley had known in Georgia, was then in London, and Wesley went to see him on November 7. He was disturbed to find that Spangenberg seemed to agree with Molther. Wesley left a few days later for Oxford and Bristol, after urging the society members to use the means of grace.<sup>88</sup>

While at Bristol, Wesley received "several unpleasant accounts" of the situation at Fetter Lane. He returned to London on November 19 and on November 30 had an unsatisfactory conference with Molther. In December he received a letter indicating that "brother Hutton, Clark, Edmonds and Bray are determined to go on, according to Mr. Molther's directions, and to raise a Church, as they term it; and I suppose above half our brethren are on their side."<sup>90</sup>

Even as the crisis at Fetter Lane was worsening, Wesley's personal ministry in London was expanding. For some time Wesley had been preaching to large crowds in Moorfields, a popular park and recreation area. Nearby stood the abandoned Royal Foundry, which had stood unused since an explosion and fire some 33 years earlier. At the end of 1739 Wesley leased the building and remodeled it, and opened it as his headquarters early in 1740.<sup>91</sup> By June of 1740 the Methodist Society at the Foundry had 300 members.<sup>92</sup> Wesley was not about to be sidetracked, nor could he agree with Molther that he lacked true faith.

As Knox observes,

While Molther and Hutton were trying to convince Wesley that the only way to attain true conversion was to wait for it in perfect stillness, he was preaching, at Bristol [as well as London] to people who cried as in the agonies of death, . . . who were released . . . then and there from the power of the devil. For Wesley, the experimentalist, it was enough.<sup>93</sup>

But Wesley did not give up trying to dissuade the Fetter Lane people from Molther's "stillness" doctrine. On January 1, 1740, he tried to explain to the society what "true stillness" really is. He was in Bristol, Oxford, and elsewhere, for most of January, March, and April, but returned on April 22 because of the growing confusion at Fetter Lane. He and Charles spent two hours with Molther on April 25 and met with the society to discuss the question of ordinances. After another prolonged stay in Bristol, he returned again to London in early June. He met with the society several more times, but on the night of July 16, after extensive debate, the majority agreed that Wesley should no longer be allowed to speak to the society.

The final break occurred, ironically, at a Sunday evening love feast four days later, on July 20. Forbidden to preach, Wesley read a short paper stating his points of disagreement with Molther. They he and 18 or 19 of the 60 or so present walked out of the meeting. Lady Huntingdon, apparently, was one of those who left with the Wesleys.<sup>94</sup>

The following Wednesday, Wesley notes, "Our little society met at the Foundery, [sic] instead of Fetter Lane." About 25 persons were present.<sup>95</sup> Wesley henceforth was to work independently of the Moravians. For its part, the Fetter Lane Society gradually evolved from July 1740 to October 1742, from an Anglican society into a Moravian congregation.<sup>96</sup> Molther was recalled to the continent, and in April 1741, Spangenberg was sent to organize and superintend Moravian work in England. In 1742 Spangenberg organized the seventy-some remaining members of the Fetter Lane Society into the first Moravian congregation in London.<sup>97</sup> Among the members were James Hutton, "the first English Moravian," who nevertheless remained on good terms with the Wesleys and published some of their books and hymns.<sup>98</sup>

What were Wesley's reasons for separating from the Fetter Lane Society? Holmes attributes the breach to misunderstandings due to language and cultural differences,<sup>99</sup> but clearly much more was at stake. Molther's views were probably not totally representative of Moravians at large, although Spangenberg seemed to agree with him.

Wesley always spoke highly of the Moravians in general, while criticizing particular points with which he could not agree. The immediate point of disagreement in 1740 was Wesley's insistence on the Anglican understanding of the means of grace. But Wesley had

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other objections as well. He wrote his brother Charles in April 1741:

As yet I dare in nowise join with the Moravians: 1) Because their whole scheme is mystical, not scriptural, — refined in every point above what is written, immeasurably beyond the plain doctrines of the Gospel. 2) Because there is darkness and closeness in all their behaviour, and guile in almost all their words. 3) Because they not only do not practice, but utterly despise and deny, self-denial and the daily cross. 4) Because they, upon principle, conform to the world, in wearing gold or costly apparel. 5) Because they extend Christian liberty, in this and many other respects, beyond what is warranted by the holy writ. 6) Because they are by no means zealous of good works; or, at least, only to their own people. And, lastly, because they make inward religion swallow up outward in general. For these reasons chiefly I will rather, God being my helper, stand quite alone, than join with them: I mean, till I have full assurance that they will spread none of the errors among the little flock committed to my charge.<sup>100</sup>

Concerning the ordinances of God, Moravian practice, said Wesley, is generally better than their principle. He felt the whole church was “tainted with Quietism, Universal Salvation, and Antinomianism” in its doctrine.<sup>101</sup> In regard to Molther, Wesley said, “The great fault of the Moravian Church seems to lie in not openly disclaiming all he had said; which in all probability they would have done, had they not leaned to the same opinion.”<sup>102</sup>

### **Methodist Beginnings at the Foundry**

Wesley was now employed full-time in preaching, writing, and organizing the growing Methodist work in London, Bristol, and other places.

The Foundry became his headquarters and was a beehive of activity. In remodeling the old building Wesley built a galleried chapel to hold 1500 people, a large room which would accommodate 300, a dispensary, and a bookroom for the sale of his books and pamphlets. Here Wesley opened a free school for 60 children, an almshouse for widows, and the first free dispensary in London since the dissolution of the monasteries.<sup>103</sup> Wesley put plain benches

instead of pews in the chapel, and noted that “all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction.”<sup>104</sup> He had an apartment on the second floor; “I myself,” he said, “as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food and at the same table.”<sup>105</sup>

As the Methodist movement grew, as many as 66 class meetings met at the Foundry weekly. Two weekly prayer meetings were held, and Wesley or one of his preachers preached regularly at 5:00 a.m.<sup>106</sup> It was a settlement almost on the Franciscan model,” comments Frederick Gill.<sup>107</sup> Or one may think of Augustine with his colleagues and parishioners gathered around him in Hippo.

Wesley’s work at the Foundry suggests something of the profound identification he felt with the poor. This was, in fact, one of the points on which he was criticized. An article in the June 1741, *Gentleman’s Magazine* describing the meetings at the Foundry complained, “Most of those Persons who frequent them, are the poorest and meanest Sort of People, who have families to provide for, and hardly Bread to put in their Mouths.”<sup>108</sup> Maldwyn Edwards suggests that Wesley practically “discovered the poor.”<sup>109</sup> “His life was one long crusade in the cause of the poor, and he encouraged others to follow his example.”<sup>110</sup>

In studying this aspect in Wesley, Edwards argues that Wesley had, on the one hand, a profound compassion for and interest in the poor, while on the other hand he distrusted the masses as a political force, convinced that government by the aristocracy was best.

Wesley once coming out from his Oxford seclusion gave himself unweariedly in the service of the poor. He grew to appreciate the conditions under which they had to live and the brave struggle they made. Set up against such a background the idle follies of the rich became reprehensible sins.<sup>111</sup>

Wesley himself wrote,

I have found some of the uneducated poor, who have the most exquisite taste and sentiment, and many, very many of the rich who have scarcely any at all. In most genteel religious persons there is such a mixture that I scarcely ever have confidence in them; but I love the poor, and in many of



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them find pure genuine grace unmixed with folly and affection. . . . If I might choose, I should still preach the gospel to the poor.<sup>112</sup>

This outline of the events in Wesley's life and ministry from his return to England in 1738, to his separation from the Moravians in 1740 shows that Wesley both benefited from and reacted against Moravian teaching and practice. The two great Moravian contributions to Wesley were in clarifying for him and leading him into the experience of saving faith, and in providing him models of Christian life in community. Whether he actually saw the Moravian Brethren as a model for renewal within the larger established church, as an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, is debatable, for Wesley knew that the Moravians had, in fact, become a separate church, despite Zinzendorf's vision. In any case, the Moravian contribution to Wesley was considerable. True, there were the problems with Molther (which, however, may have actually helped Wesley clarify his understanding of the Sacraments). But without Peter Böhler, Wesley might never have been anything more than a very zealous sacramentarian, seeking personal holiness in a relentless life of good works.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Letter from Dublin, June 20, 1789. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* ed. John Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), VIII, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 423.

<sup>3</sup>Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Epworth Press, 1945), p. 175; John S. Simon, *John Wesley: The Last Phase*, (London: Epworth Press, 1934), p. 319. According to Bernard Semmel, the population of England and Wales grew from an estimated 5,826,000 in 1700 to about 9,156,000 at the end of the century. Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>C. E. Vulliamy, *John Wesley* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. vii.

<sup>5</sup>Alan R. Tippett, "The Church Which Is His Body," *Missiology*, 2:2 (April, 1974), p. 147.

<sup>6a</sup>Arthur Skevington Wood, "The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace" in Clark Pinnock, ed., *Grace Unlimited*, (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1975), p. 209.

<sup>6b</sup>George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. xxxi.

<sup>6</sup>Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 299.

<sup>7</sup>Ernest F. Stoeffler, "Tradition and Renewal in the Ecclesiology of John Wesley,"

in Bernd Jaspert and Rudolf Mohr, eds., *Traditio — Krisis — Renovatio aus theologischer Sicht* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1976), p. 299.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>9</sup>Ernest A. Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England*, 3rd ed. rev. (London: SCM Press, 1951), p. 93. Cf. Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968).

<sup>10</sup>I have preferred to use Believers' Church to Free Church in this study as more accurately describing the essential characteristics of the "Radical Protestant" tradition and to avoid placing emphasis on the establishment-versus-disestablishment question.

<sup>11</sup>An Anglican rector and convert to Anglicanism from a Dissenting family.

<sup>12</sup>Stoeffler, p. 302.

<sup>13</sup>Vulliamy, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30. The influence of Law should not be over-emphasized, however, for Wesley was simultaneously reading many other books. Also, Wesley from the beginning had a decidedly practical bent which kept him from extreme mysticism. For Wesley's correspondence with Law during the critical month of May, 1738, see Wesley's *Works* (Zondervan edition), XII, pp. 51-53; Telford, *The Life of John Wesley* (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1899), pp. 103-06.

<sup>15</sup>Vulliamy, p. 53.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 60. Later Wesley said he was too concerned at this period about his own soul.

<sup>17</sup>Vulliamy, pp. 53-54.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>21</sup>*Journal* (1909 ed.), I, p. 142.

<sup>22</sup>Baker, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 51-52. The organization of religious societies owed nothing to the Moravians, but the bands certainly did.

<sup>26</sup>John Holmes, *History of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren*, (London: J. Nisbet, 1825), I, pp. 308-09.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 125.

<sup>30</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup>Holmes, I, p. 311; William G. Addison, *The Renewed Church of the United Brethren 1722-1930* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1932), p. 62; Nolan B. Harmon, ed., *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974), I, p. 291; J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), pp. 138-39. Halevy notes that Böhler "had been ordained a priest by Zinzendorf the previous year, and since the Church of England had formally recognized the validity of the Moravian episcopacy, John and Charles Wesley did not have the scruples" about him they would otherwise have had. Elie

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Halevy, *The Birth of Methodism in England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 55.

<sup>32</sup>Telford, *The Life of John Wesley*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>33</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 82.

<sup>34</sup>Baker, pp. 52-53. Wesley had earlier experimented some with extempore prayer, particularly in services on shipboard, and had witnessed the practice among other groups.

<sup>35</sup>Addison, p. 62.

<sup>36</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 87

<sup>37</sup>Stoeffler, p. 304; A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 66.

<sup>38</sup>Wood, p. 67, quoting Dorothy Marshall.

<sup>39</sup>Harmon, I, p. 1185; Vulliamy, p. 85; Addison, p. 83.

<sup>40</sup>Addison, p. 83.

<sup>41</sup>Addison gives a good summary of the society system in England, pp. 79-81. See also Halevy, pp. 41ff, who traces the origin of the society movement in general and of the religious societies in particular. Halevy notes the sacramental zeal of the religious societies and their dedication to good works, especially visitation of the poor, sick and prisoners. The Holy Club at Oxford was based on this model. As to the role such societies played in Wesley's and Whitefield's ministry after 1738, Halevy notes that the two evangelists "found these societies numerous and flourishing; they succeeded so well in penetrating them with their influence that it is often difficult to say whether, during the three years which preceded their break with the established church, when the Methodists speak of a society, they mean a new association that they formed to spread their doctrine or one of the earlier Religious Societies that was now open, by the will of its members, to their new preaching" (Halevy, pp. 42-43).

<sup>42</sup>John C. Bowmer, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism* (London: Dacre Press, 1951), p. 38.

<sup>43</sup>Lewis, p. 125; Knox, p. 470.

<sup>44</sup>Wesley notes, "The return of my brother's illness obliged me again to hasten to London. In the evening [of May 1] I found him at James Hutton's. . ." (*Journal* [1827 ed.], I, p. 87). Cf. Vulliamy, p. 84.

<sup>45</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 87.

<sup>46</sup>Richard Watson, *The Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1853), p. 52.

<sup>47</sup>Addison, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, pp. 87-88. Vulliamy says, "Here is the germ of Methodist organization, and it cannot be doubted that the rules were drawn up by Wesley himself" (p. 85).

<sup>49</sup>Addison, p. 62.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>51</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 100.

<sup>52</sup>Stoeffler, p. 305.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>54</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 152.

<sup>55</sup>*Works.* (Zondervan ed.), XII, p. 55.

<sup>56</sup>Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 353.

<sup>57</sup>Frank Baker, "The People Called Methodists. 3. Polity," in Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965), I, p. 220.

<sup>58</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, pp. 163-64.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>60</sup>Vulliamy, p. 90.

<sup>61</sup>Harmon, I, p. 329.

<sup>62</sup>Harris and Griffith Jones, an Anglican "missionary" to Wales, had already begun open-air preaching before 1738. Halevy notes that Whitefield met Jones and Harris soon after his return from America. Whitefield wrote of Harris, "When I first saw him, my Heart was Knit closely to him. I wanted to catch some of his Fire, and gave him the right Hand of Fellowship with my whole heart." Halevy adds, "It was then that Whitefield began open-air preaching near Bristol among the miners of Kingswood, in the manner of the Welsh preachers." Halevy, p. 60.

<sup>63</sup>Halevy, p. 69. See also Bernard Semmel's significant recent study, *The Methodist Revolution* (Note 3, above), which follows Halevy and attempts to test the validity of Halevy's thesis concerning the social-political influence of the Wesleyan Revival.

<sup>64</sup>Semmel, p. 13.

<sup>65</sup>*The Gentleman's Magazine*, IX (May, 1739), p. 257.

<sup>66</sup>"Of the pernicious Nature and Tendency of Methodism," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, IX (May, 1739), p. 257.

<sup>67</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 177.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.

<sup>70</sup>Payne, pp. 92-93; Vulliamy, p. 94.

<sup>71</sup>*Works* (Zondervan ed.), VIII, pp. 248-68.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, p. 141.

<sup>75</sup>*Works* (Zondervan ed.), VIII, p. 258.

<sup>76</sup>"Rules of the Band-Societies," *Works* (Zondervan ed.), VIII, pp. 272-73. Additional directions were given six years later; *ibid.*, pp. 273-74.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 151; Watson, p. 96; *Works* (Zondervan ed.), VIII, pp. 252-53.

<sup>78</sup>*Works* (Zondervan ed.), p. 253.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 253-54.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>81</sup>Wood, pp. 191, 192.

<sup>82</sup>"Minutes of Several Conversations . . . ," *Works* (Zondervan ed.), p. 307.

<sup>83</sup>*Works* (Zondervan ed.), pp. 261-63.

<sup>84</sup>Holmes, I, pp. 311-12.

<sup>85</sup>Holmes, I, p. 311; Harmon, II, p. 1654.

<sup>86</sup>Bowmer, p. 40.

<sup>87</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 237.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 237, 245.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup>Vulliamy, p. 102; Harmon, II, pp. 1444-45; L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A., Founder of the Methodists* (New York: Harper and

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Brothers, 1872), I, pp. 214, 271-73.

<sup>92</sup>Baker, "The People Called Methodists . . .," p. 220.

<sup>93</sup>Knox, p. 472.

<sup>94</sup>Addison, p. 84; Vulliamy, p. 140; Bowmer, p. 40; Holmes, I, p. 314; and Wesley's *Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 271.

<sup>95</sup>*Journal* (1827 ed.), I, p. 271. Moede (following Tyerman) says 75 were present — 18 from Fetter Lane and 57 others. Gerald F. Moede, *The Office of Bishop in Methodism: Its History and Development* (Zurich: Publishing House of the Methodist Church, 1964), p. 15.

<sup>96</sup>Addison, pp. 86-91.

<sup>97</sup>Knox, p. 474; Holmes, I, p. 315; Harmon, II, p. 2222; Lewis, pp. 127-28.

<sup>98</sup>Harmon, I, p. 1185.

<sup>99</sup>Holmes, I, pp. 312-13.

<sup>100</sup>*Works* (Zondervan ed.), XII, p. 109. Wesley seems to be describing here principally the London Moravians. Does this passage suggest a marked socio-economic difference between these Moravians and Wesley's flock at the Foundry?

<sup>101</sup>*Works* (Zondervan ed.), VIII, pp. 378, 422.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 412.

<sup>103</sup>Harmon, II, p. 1444.

<sup>104</sup>Tyerman, I, p. 272.

<sup>105</sup>Frederick C. Gill, *In the Steps of John Wesley* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), p. 43.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, Cf. *Works* (Oxford ed.), XI, pp. 1, 84-85.

<sup>108</sup>"Doctrines and Divisions of the Methodists," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XI (June, 1741), p. 320.

<sup>109</sup>Maldwyn Edwards, *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century: A Study of His Social and Political Influence*, rev. ed. (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), p. 148.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49; cf. pp. 50-53.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 50.